

VOLUME 6 SURVEILLANCE

CHAPTER 2 PART 121, 135, AND 91 SUBPART K INSPECTIONS

Section 3 General Inspection Practices and Procedures for Parts 121, 135, and 91 Subpart K

6-211 GENERAL. This section contains information on both objectives and characteristics of inspections. It contains direction and guidance on the planning and conduct of specific types of inspections in support of an overall surveillance program. This guidance applies to all aviation safety inspectors who conduct inspections of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 121 or 135 operators.

6-212 OBJECTIVE OF AN INSPECTION. The primary objective of any inspection is to determine that a person, an item, or a certain segment of an operation associated with air transportation meets at least the same standards that were required for initial certification or approval by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). For inspectors to make these determinations, inspections must be conducted in an orderly and standardized manner. To accomplish this, each type of inspection must have individual objectives and be conducted each time in generally the same manner, according to the direction and guidance in this handbook and with appropriate job aids.

6-213 CHARACTERISTICS OF AN INSPECTION. As discussed in sections 1 and 2 of this chapter, each type of inspection is a specific event (work activity) which has the following characteristics:

- A specific work activity title and PTRS activity code
- A definite beginning and a definite end
- Specific objectives to be met
- General procedures to be followed
- A report of findings

A. Each type of inspection is identified with a specific title. Also, each type of inspection is assigned a specific PTRS activity code for the purpose of computer automation and for reference in the planning and tracking of inspection activity.

B. Inspections have a definite beginning and end. They may be scheduled by an inspector for the observation and evaluation of a specific activity, such as a proficiency check, or they may be scheduled for the evaluation of operator documents, manuals, or approved programs. A specific inspection activity may be initiated and completed in a short time or it may be initiated on one day and completed several days later with other types of work activity conducted during that time. In any case, an inspection begins when an inspector initiates the inspection task and ends when the inspector has completed the inspection report.

C. Inspections have general procedures that inspectors should follow for standardization purposes. These general procedures are outlined in the following sections of this chapter. In most cases, there is a specific job aid for each type of inspection which contains lists of specific items or areas which should be observed and evaluated, when applicable, during the inspection. Examples of these job aids are included in respective sections of this chapter.

D. The primary objective of any inspection is to determine that a person, item, or segment of an operation complies or continues to comply with regulations, safe operating practices, and other established standards. Each inspection types, however, has specific objectives, which are discussed in respective sections of this chapter.

E. An inspection is not complete until a report on the results of the inspection has been recorded. This report of inspection results is usually recorded on the PTRS Data Sheet (see section 2 of this chapter). This inspection report is the key element of any inspection. Inspection must be concise, factual, and objective in reporting inspection results.

6-214 CONDUCTING AN INSPECTION. Due to the complexity of the air transportation industry there are various types of inspections, each type with specific objectives. When deciding which type of inspection to conduct, inspectors should consider the objectives of each type of inspection and determine the type most appropriate and effective for a particular situation. An inspector's decision to conduct a particular type of inspection may be based on an isolated situation, such as a complaint or an incident, or on some other information that raises a question about compliance with a regulation or safe operating practice. In most situations, however, the types of inspections that need to be conducted are determined by managers, supervisors, and POIs during the development of surveillance programs. These determinations are based on the analyses of previously collected surveillance data and other related information.

A. Preparing for an Inspection. Before conducting an inspection, inspectors should to the extent possible, familiarize themselves with an operator's systems, methods, and procedures. To obtain this familiarization, inspectors can review those sections of the operator's manuals pertinent to the type of inspection to be conducted. Additional familiarization can be obtained by an inspector questioning and discussing the operator's systems, methods and procedures with the POIs and with other inspectors already acquainted with the operator. When possible, inspectors should become aware of any previous deficiencies or negative trends by reviewing previous surveillance data pertinent to the type of inspection to be conducted. Inspectors must be acquainted with the applicable direction and guidance in this handbook for the type of inspection to be conducted. Inspectors can review the appropriate job aid as a reminder of the areas to be evaluated.

B. Advance Notice of an Inspection. Most inspections will cause some disruptions to routine operations. Responsible operators engaged in air transportation understand the legal basis for FAA surveillance and are generally cooperative in responding to the needs of inspectors during the conduct of inspections. Operators are required to afford inspectors the opportunity to conduct inspections in a manner that effectively accomplishes the objectives of the inspections. Inspectors should, however, arrange their inspection activities so they will result in a minimum amount of disruption to routine operations. In general, it is appropriate and helpful to both the

operator and inspectors to provide advance notice that an inspection is to be conducted. Advance notice should be given for inspections which take operator personnel away from their normal duties, such as records inspections. Such advance notice is usually unnecessary for those inspections which result in only a minimal involvement of operator personnel. Examples of inspections in which advance notice serves little purpose include ramp inspections.

C. Limiting the Scope of an Inspection. Each type of inspection has a set of items or areas that inspectors should observe and evaluate during the inspection. Sufficient time should be allotted for effective evaluation of all the items or areas. The circumstances under which inspections are conducted however, vary considerably. Often inspectors will not be able to evaluate all the specified items or areas. The more important consideration is to thoroughly and qualitatively evaluate those items or areas in which the inspector has the time and opportunity to observe. In some circumstances, it may be preferable for an inspector to limit the scope of a particular inspection type to ensure the quality of the inspection. When an inspection is limited in scope, the inspector should provide a comment on how it was limited, and indicate it by either recording the number and type of records or manuals evaluated, recording the general areas evaluated, or by recording the general areas not evaluated. In general, it is better to schedule sufficient time to evaluate all the items or areas specified for an inspection type. Inspections that are limited in scope, however, do serve a useful purpose and can still provide valuable information.

D. Inspector Conduct. The actions and conduct of an aviation safety inspector are subject to close scrutiny by the personnel they encounter during the performance of an inspection. Inspectors must conduct themselves as aviation professionals at all times when conducting inspections. When initiating an inspection, inspectors shall properly identify themselves and ensure that the appropriate operator personnel are fully aware of the type and purpose of the inspection being conducted. Inspectors shall wear name tags or other appropriate identification in plain view during the conduct of the inspections. When observing or evaluating operator personnel during the performance of their assigned duties, inspectors shall not intervene in a manner that could adversely hinder or preclude them from effectively performing their duties. If, however, an inspector observes a condition that is obviously unsafe or that could potentially become unsafe, the inspector shall immediately inform the appropriate operator personnel of the condition.

E. Concluding an Inspection. At the conclusion of an inspection, inspectors should usually debrief appropriate operator personnel of the inspection results. When appropriate to the type of inspection conducted, the debriefing should include a summary of the area inspected and the inspector's opinion concerning the compliance status of each area. Persons, items, or areas that were found to meet or exceed standards should also be commented on during the debriefing. Post-inspection debriefing must include an explanation of any deficiencies that were found during the inspection. Appropriate operator personnel must be informed of any areas that will require some form of follow-up action. If it appears that a regulation has been violated, inspectors must inform responsible operator personnel that an investigation into the apparent violation will be initiated. When an inspector is unable to debrief the appropriate operator employees on any deficiencies because those employees are not available, the inspector should

indicate in the inspection report that the operator was not briefed on the deficiencies. Isolated types of deficiencies found during an inspection can often be corrected by operator personnel while the inspection is being conducted. Such deficiencies can be adequately resolved and closed out during the post-inspection debriefing. In these cases, however, inspectors should record information about the deficiency and how it was corrected on the inspection report because such information is useful for trend evaluations. The preparation of the inspection report is the final action that must be taken by inspectors to conclude an inspection. All reports on specific types of inspections shall be recorded on the PTRS Data Sheet (see section 2 of this chapter).

[D1]**RESERVED.** Paragraphs 6-215 through 6-230.